

A remote house in the west of Scotland (lower level)**Topic**

Scotland, holidays, homes

Learning outcomes

- Explain some advantages and disadvantages of living in a remote place
- Identify specific information in a recording of an interview
- Use synonyms and definitions as a strategy to clarify meaning in spoken / written texts
- Write a monologue or a magazine article about a photo

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1)

Time

Approximately 50-70 minutes

Materials

- Presentation OR Student worksheet
- Audio file: A remote house in the west of Scotland
- Image: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/5153911946/in/set-72157625148058641>

In addition, you will need to show:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/albums/72157626527253332/>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/albums/72157625148058641/>


Alternatively, provide some images of holiday photos, or photos of houses, or ask students to bring their own.

Introduction

This lesson is designed to encourage students to use their higher-level critical thinking skills to talk about an image. It focuses on a photograph of a remote house in west Scotland. Students begin the lesson by thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of living in such a place. They then listen to a recording of the photographer talking about the photo. They practise using synonyms and definitions as a strategy to clarify meaning, then move on to talk and write about a photo of their choice.

As long as teachers can show the photo, it is possible to deliver this lesson with no other resources. However, teachers can also use a presentation and / or a student worksheet.

Procedure

<p>Lead-in (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show slide 2 of the presentation or display the photo: https://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/5153911946/in/set-72157625148058641 Explain that the photo is a house in the west of Scotland. Ask students if they would like to live in this house. Ask some to give reasons why / why not. In pairs or small groups, students write a list of advantages and disadvantages of living in the house in the photo. Ask some pairs / groups to give advantages / disadvantages. e.g. it's isolated / remote. Depending on your students' experience, what's an advantage for some may be a disadvantage for others: e.g. some may like the isolation, others not. Encourage them to discuss and give reasons. 
<p>Listening: Part 1 (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that students are going to listen to the woman who took the photograph of the house. Show slide 3 of the presentation or dictate / write the following questions on the board: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why was the woman in the west of Scotland? When was she there? Where was she staying? Give students a few minutes to predict answers in pairs / small groups or as a

	<p>whole class. This helps them to think about the language that could be in the text and may help them to understand better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play the first part of the audio recording (A remote house in the west of Scotland) i.e. until 1.13 (the interviewer says, 'Yes, that's true. Yeah.') • As students listen, they try to find answers to questions 1-3. After the recording, give them time to compare their ideas, then play the first part again if necessary. • Check answers with the class. • If necessary, explain the concept of 'self-catering'. As a further question, you could ask why she chooses this kind of holiday accommodation (they don't like spending holiday time looking for restaurants; you can eat what / when you want; it's expensive to eat in a restaurant in the UK). <p>Answers: 1. She was on a family holiday; 2. About 8-9 years ago; 3. She was staying just south of Oban (about 2 hours north of Glasgow), they were staying in a self-catering cottage on the coast</p> <p>Note: You could show places mentioned in the recording on a map (Oban, Glasgow) to show where the woman was staying.</p>
<p>Listening: Part 2 (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind students that the woman and her family stayed in a self-catering cottage on the coast – and not the house in the photograph. • Show slide 4 of the presentation or dictate / write the following questions on the board: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did the family do during their holiday? 2. Why did the woman take a photo of the house? • Give students a few minutes to predict answers in pairs / small groups or as a whole class. • Play the second part of the recording, from 1.13 (Carol: Anyway, we were on holiday, and we'd been spending time...) • As students listen, they try to find answers to questions 1-2. After the recording, give them time to compare their ideas, then play the second part again if necessary. • Check answers with the class. You could ask students if they like the photo, and if they agree with the woman that it's 'good to be alone sometimes'. <p>Answers: 1. Relaxing, walking along beaches, visiting local villages and pubs, & they rented a boat; 2. The house drew her attention / caught her eye</p>

	<p><i>because it's remote / isolated. She liked it.</i></p>
<p>Focus on language: clarifying what you mean (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 5 of the presentation or hand out hand out / display the student worksheet. • Alternatively, write the following words and sentences on the board: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a cottage 2. self-catering 3. It caught my eye. 4. remote 5. It appealed to me. • Explain that in the recording the photographer and the interviewer often use synonyms and definitions to clarify what is meant. For example, the photographer gives a definition for 'a cottage'. • Students should listen to the recording again and listen out for the language used to clarify words and expressions 1-5. • Play the complete recording again. Students listen and note (a) or (b), or note the words / expressions that they hear. • Check answers with the class. If you like, you could hand out / show the transcript available on slides 6-7 and also in the Appendix at the end of this lesson plan. <p><i>Answers: 1. a cottage (a great little house); 2. self-catering (You can cook and eat when you want and what you want); 3. It caught my eye (It drew my attention); 4. remote (isolated, far away from everything – also alone); 5. It appealed to me (I liked it).</i></p>
<p>Describing a photograph (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to choose a photograph from one of the following albums on ELTpics: <p>https://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/albums/72157626527253332/</p> <p>https://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/albums/72157625148058641/</p> • Alternatively, you could show some of your own photos related to holidays / houses, or students could choose one of their own holiday / house photos. • Show slide 8 of the presentation, or give instructions. • Tell students to write five words or phrases which describe the photo. They should then write synonyms or definitions of the words / phrases. They can work together to share ideas or use a dictionary to do this.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around as students do this and help where necessary.
Writing (or homework) (20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 9 of the presentation or give instructions. • Tell students to imagine that they took the photograph that they have chosen. They should write a monologue or an article for a travel magazine / website about it. In the monologue / article they should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where the photograph was taken ○ Why they were there ○ Why they took the photo • They should also include the words and synonyms or definitions from the previous task. • Give students a time limit to write. Walk around and help where necessary and encourage them to add as much information as possible. • Encourage students to work together so that they can help each other.
Follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When students are ready (or in the next class if students did the writing task for homework), put students into pairs or small groups. They show each other their photos and deliver their monologues. • If your students have written an article, collect them and post them in a blog or put them on the wall for classmates to read. • If you like, you can use the texts as an opportunity for feedback. Review the texts / listen to the monologues and provide feedback on good examples of language / errors.

Adapted from a lesson contributed by

Activity: Fiona Mauchline

Photograph: Stephanie Stanger

Appendix: A remote house in the west of Scotland

Carol: I took this photo during a family holiday we had on the coast, um, the west coast of Scotland. We were staying just south of a town called Oban, which is about, oh I don't know, about two hours north of Glasgow, Scotland's biggest city. And it was, oh, probably about eight years ago. Eight or nine.

We were staying in a self-catering cottage, a great little house it was, with a fantastic kitchen, and very comfortable.

Interviewer: Self-catering? Yeah?

Carol: Yes. We don't like having to look for restaurants all the time, it's not a good way to spend your holiday time. With self-catering, you can cook and eat when you want and what you want. And anyway, eating in a restaurant with a family of four people is, you know, it's very expensive in the UK.

Interviewer: Yes, that's true. Yeah.

Carol: Anyway, we were on holiday, and we'd been spending time just, you know, relaxing and walking along the beaches, visiting the local villages and pubs and and, yes, just relaxing, and on this particular day we had rented a boat. There was just me, my husband and our two children, and they were about ten and twelve at the time.

And most of the photos I took that day were of us and the children trying to drive the boat and...and things like that, but I also took photos of the coast, the beaches, which are incredibly beautiful, and this house caught my eye, you know? It drew my attention, because it's so remote, so – well – alone and and, well, that quite appealed to me at the time. I liked it.

Interviewer: It really does look totally alone, doesn't it? Very, eh, isolated or...or far away from everything.

Carol: Yes, but that's what I like about it. It's good to be alone sometimes, isn't it? I mean, I wouldn't want to live there permanently but sometimes, you know, yes. Don't you agree?